

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Roylance on 11-6-2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the claims:

Please amend claim 19 as follows:

--19. An A vehicle cushioning material comprising an expanded molded article according to Claim 18 using as a vehicle cushioning material. –

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The claimed invention is drawn pre-expanded beads styrene-modified polyolefin-based resin comprising pre-expanded beads of a polystyrene based polyolefin-based resin modified with a polystyrene-based resin, wherein a styrene-based monomer forming a polystyrene-based resin in the beads is used in the range of 100 to 1,000 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of a polyolefin-based resin, a bulk density of each bead is 0.012 to 0.20 g/cm³, and an absorbance ratio at 698 cm⁻¹ and 2850 cm⁻¹ (D698/D2850) obtained from an infrared absorption spectrum of each bead surface measured by ATR method infrared spectroscopy is in the range of 0.1 to 2.5;

and a method of producing such pre-expanded beads by step polymerization of styrene in the presence of polyolefin as specified in claim 7.

While pre-expanded beads of styrene modified polyolefins are well known in the art, the applicants have shown that the claimed step-polymerization process results in beads having the specified absorbance ratio at 698 cm-1 and 2850 cm-1(D698/D2850), which, in turn, results in pre-expanded beads with significantly improved properties no shown by the beads of prior art..

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Irina S. Zemel whose telephone number is (571)272-0577. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Seidleck can be reached on (571)272-1078. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/ Irina S. Zemel/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1796

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